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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Connecticut's Middlesex Community College (MxCC) to develop a profile of the college's 1988 graduates in terms of program area, age, sex, student status, attendance patterns, and grade point average (GPA). Study findings about the 272 graduates included the following: (1) the number of graduates was higher in 1988 than in the two previous years; (2) 34.2% of the graduates received a degree in General Studies, and 19.5% in Business Administration; (3) 10 programs experienced increases in the number of graduates over the previous year; (4) 68.4% of the graduates were women; (5) 15.1% of the students attended full-time; (6) the average number of semesters attended by the graduates was 7.7, an increase of 12.7% over the previous year's average; (7) more students in the 1988 graduating class had interrupted their studies than in the previous four years; (8) students with degrees in Information Systems, Legal Secretarial, and Business Administration attended an average of 9 or more semesters, while students in General Law Enforcement graduated after an average of 3.6 semesters; (9) the average GPA for all graduates was 3.029, with women achieving higher averages than men; and (10) 46% of the graduates had withdrawn from at least one course, and 10% had received at least one grade of "incomplete." (The data is presented in six tables.) (AJL)

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OUR GRADUATES:
MORE THAN A PRODUCT
CLASS OF 1988

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction. 1

Data 2

Table I: Numbers By Program, Sex, and Age of Graduates. . 2

Table II: Student Status of Graduates 4

Figure 1 5

Table III: Average Number of Semesters Attended By Program 6

Table IV: Grades of Graduates 7

Table V: Miscellaneous Data 9

Table VI: Use of Credits by Graduates 10

Table VII: Graduates Who Took Remedial Courses. 11

Observations 11

Conclusion 12

INTRODUCTION

The impetus that originally activated an interest in our graduating class four years ago continues to be strong which encourages a fourth annual report on the "product" of Middlesex Community College: our graduates. While it is not intended here to slight in any way anything that our college community provides for any/all of our students, the main focus of this report will be the measurable aspects of our graduates, as it has been during the last four years. This report will look at the numbers of graduates by program, their age and sex. It will look at student status, when they entered MxCC and if they interrupted attendance and average number of semesters attended. It will look at Q.P.A.'s in relation to a number of factors, how they used transfer credits and the status of their remedial courses along with other miscellaneous data. In some cases this report will compare the data of this graduating class with that of the classes of the previous four years. It should be understood that the nature of this report restricts itself by limiting this only to the measurable data, for in essence out class of '88 is definitely more than a mere product of collected information.

The format of this report will be consistent with that used in the previous reports, that is the use of tables and graphs.

DATA:

The data in Table 1 reflects the number of graduates by program, their sex and age. This year we added a new degree, Communication Arts in which there was one graduate. General Studies continues to be our largest degree with 93 (34.2%) students in this graduating class as apposed to 74 (30.1%) of last year. This is followed by 53 (19.5%) students in the Business Administration degree. A total of ten degree programs had a rise in the number of graduates from last year while seven decreased in number, two remained the same. The number of graduates (272) increased by 10.6% over last year. Number of women 186 (68.4%) as usual out numbered the number of men 86 (31.6%). Averages ages remain fairly consistent. Table 1 gives a more detailed picture of this information.

TABLE I

NUMBERS BY PROGRAM, SEX, AND AGE OF GRADUATES

	Number of Graduates	Average Age of Graduates	Number of Women	Average Age of Women	Number of Men	Average Age of Men
Communication Arts	1	26.0	1	26.0	0	--
Liberal Arts/Sciences	2	28.5	0	--	2	28.5
Accounting	12	29.3	11	30.3	1	19.0
Broadcast Comm.	4	27.5	1	29.0	3	27.0
Business Admin.	53	30.3	36	31.3	17	28.2
Drug & Alcohol	3	32.3	3	32.3	0	--
Env. Science	3	24.7	1	19.0	2	27.5

Table I continued

Executive Sec.	11	25.6	11	25.6	0	--
General	93	33.5	57	33.3	36	33.9
Gen. Bus. Option	6	30.3	3	30.3	0	--
Gen. Com. Art	9	25.8	6	27.5	3	22.3
Gen. Law Enforcement	7	30.9	0	--	7	30.9
Human Services	17	29.4	16	29.5	1	28.0
Information Systems	17	28.6	9	30.3	8	26.8
Legal Secretarial	1	32.0	1	32.0	0	--
Marketing	13	27.2	10	28.3	3	23.7
Medical Sec.	1	27.0	1	27.0	0	--
Medical Sec. & Assist.	1	27.0	1	27.0	0	--
Radiologic Technology	11	22.9	8	23.4	3	21.7
W/I Proces. Cert.	3	32.3	3	32.3	0	--
Total 1988	272*	30.6 S.D.9.8	186 (68.4%)	30.8 S.D.9.8	86 (31.6%)	29.0 S.D.9.5
Total 1987	246	29.2	163	29.3	83	28.8
1986	263	29.1	178	28.6	85	30.1
1985	284	29.5	198	29.2	86	30.2

*Number includes multiple degrees

S.D. Standard Deviation

Table II identifies students by status. It could be noted that except for 1985, this graduating class had the least amount of students (15.1%) who attended full time. Programs that have a greater number

of students who attend full time are General: Commercial Art where six of the nine graduates were full time only and Radiology where five of the eleven students were of this status. Most other programs fall into the category of Full and Part Time Students. It should be noted that this years graduates had the highest number who interrupted attendance of the four years studied.

TABLE II

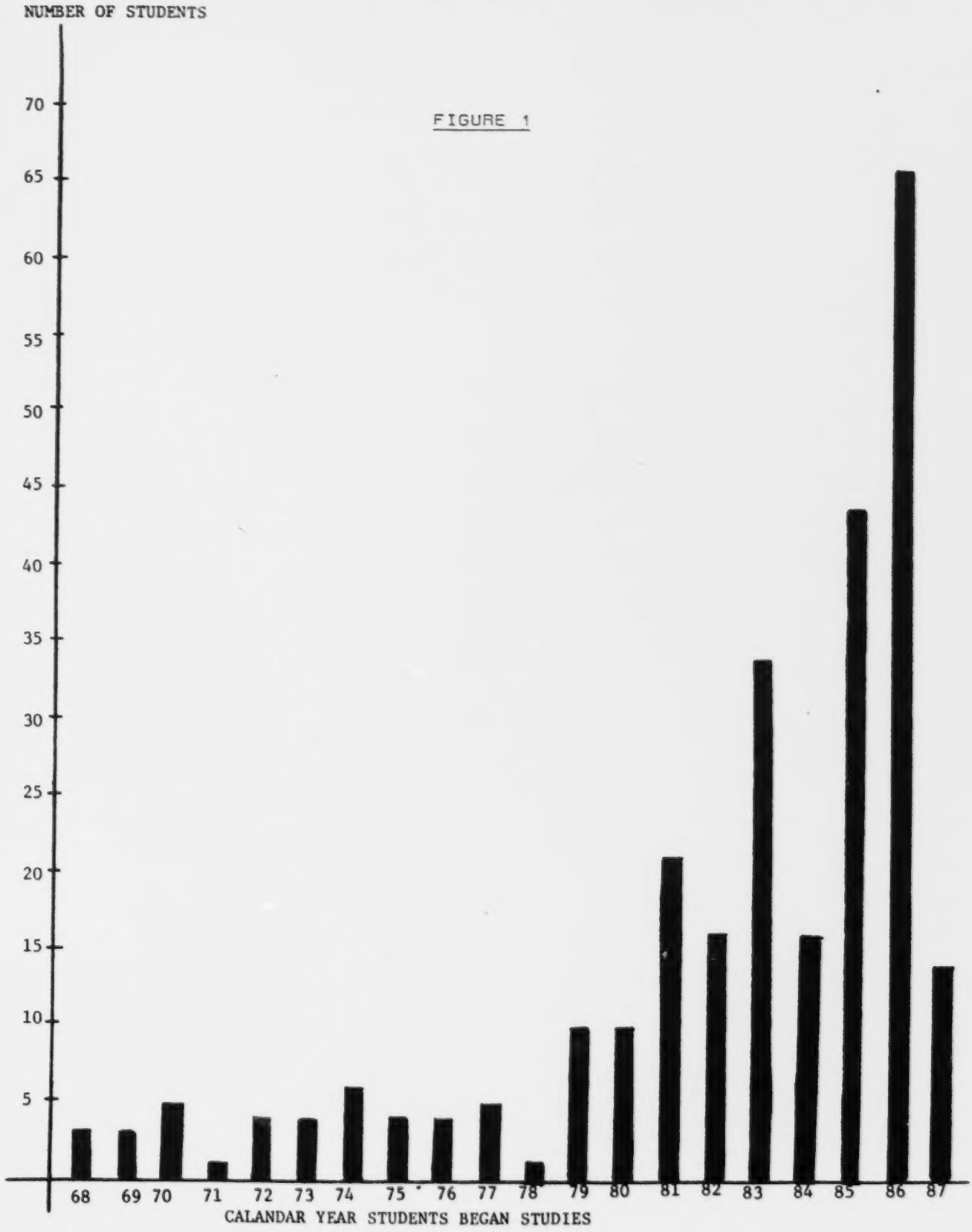
STUDENT STATUS OF GRADUATES

N = 272

		1988	1987	1986	1985
Full Time Only	41	15.1%	17.9%	20.9%	12.8%
Part Time Only	93	34.2%	31.7%	26.6%	33.5%
Full/Part Time	138	50.7%	50.4%	52.5%	53.7%
Students who interrupted Attendance	124	45.6%	28.5%	38.8%	37.4%

Table III shows the average number of semesters attended by program. Overall the average for this graduating class is 7.7 semesters attended an increase of 12.7% over last year's 6.83 average semesters. In all but five of the degree programs the average number of semesters increased. Figure 1 reflects approximately when students began their education, the majority having begun during

FIGURE 1


NUMBER OF STUDENTS
70
65
60
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87
CALANDAR YEAR STUDENTS BEGAN STUDIES

1986 although they go back as far as 1966 when three students from this graduating class began.

TABLE III

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEMESTERS ATTENDED BY PROGRAM

	Average Number of Semesters Attended	Standard Deviation
Communication Arts	6.0	0.0
Liberal Arts & Science	5.0	.94
Accounting	8.4	4.3
Broadcast Communications	6.3	1.9
Business Administration	9.0	4.5
Drug & Alcohol	7.3	2.6
Environmental Science	7.6	2.6
Executive Secretarial	6.5	2.7
General	7.5	3.9
General Business Option	8.7	4.6
General Commercial Art	5.2	1.8
General Fine Art Option	8.5	2.8
General Law Enforcement	3.6	1.8
Human Services	7.7	3.4
Information Systems	9.4	5.4
Legal Secretarial	9.0	0.0
Marketing	7.4	2.6
Medical Secretarial	8.5	0.0

Table III continued

Medical Secretarial & Assistant	8.5	2.5
Radiologic Technology	7.4	2.4
W/I Processing Certificate	5.3	1.2
OVERALL (1988)	7.7	4.0
(1987)	6.8	3.4
(1986)	6.9	3.2
(1985)	7.1	--

While some things change, probably one of the most consistent statistics throughout the past four years is that of grades. Table IV reflects the stability of our graduates in regard to quality point average. Females still maintain higher QPAs and women age 25 and older score the highest average QPA. Both men and women over this age score higher average QPAs than those of their counter-parts age 25 and under. Table IV gives a more comprehensive explanation of this data.

TABLE IV

GRADES OF GRADUATES

	All	Females	Males
Average QPA	3.029	3.082	2.889
Median	3.117	3.167	2.984
Variance	.302	.301	.381
Standard Deviation	.550	.549	.618
Range	2.000	2.000	1.900
Minimum Value	2.000	2.000	2.100

Table IV continued

Maximum Value	4.000	4.000	4.000
Sample Size	272	186	86
Average QPA (1987)	3.012	3.080	2.880
Average QPA (1986)	2.996	2.991	2.990
Average QPA (1985)	3.021	3.073	2.895

	QPA All	QPA Females	QPA Males
Under Age 25	N = 102 (37.5%) Mean = 2.711 S.D. = .479	N = 72 Mean = 2.733 S.D. = .485	N = 30 Mean = 2.682 S.D. = .465
Age 25 and older	N = 170 (62.5) Mean = 3.220 S.D. = .497	N = 114 Mean = 3.305 S.D. = .462	N = 56 Mean = 3.027 S.D. = .531

Table V gives us some miscellaneous information concerning grades. Numbers of students who withdraw from at least one course range from 42.3% in 1987 to 53.0% in 1985. These numbers remain fairly consistent throughout the four years. Of those students who withdrew from courses, the average number of courses with "W" grades also remains stable. While percentages are not as high as those for withdrawal grades, the averages of incomplete grades also remain consistent throughout the four years examined. Table V also tells us that the average QPA students received after approximately twelve credits remains very close but the percent of change from QPA after twelve credits to final QPA is slightly increasing. The correlation of QPA after twelve credits to the final QPA has remained relatively uniform in the past two years, but down from the 1985,

'86 correlation. I wonder if the change over to +, - grades might be showing some of its affect in this data.

TABLE V

MISCELLANEOUS DATA

Number of Graduates With "W" Grades

1988	N = 125 (46.0%)	Mean = 2.5
1987	N = 104 (42.3%)	Mean = 2.4
1986	N = 139 (52.9%)	Mean = 2.5
1985	N = 149 (53.0%)	Mean = 2.7

Number of Graduates With "I" Grades

1988	N = 28 (10.3%)	Mean = 1.7
1987	N = 16 (6.5%)	Mean = 1.6
1986	N = 25 (9.5%)	Mean = 1.4
1985	N = 18 (6.4%)	Mean = 1.2

Average QPA After 12 Credits

1988	N = 272	Mean = 2.942	S.D. = .66
1987	N = 246	Mean = 2.928	S.D. = .62
1986	N = 263	Mean = 2.923	S.D. = .64
1985	N = 284	Mean = 2.969	-----

Percent Change To Final QPA

Year	After 12 Credits	Final	% Change
1988	2.942	3.029	+2.96%
1987	2.928	3.012	+2.86%
1986	2.923	2.996	+2.50%
1985	2.969	3.021	+1.75%

Correlation of QPA After 12 Credits To Final QPA

1988	r = +.67	1986	r = +.96
1987	r = +.66	1985	r = +.88

Table VI reflects the use of credits by our graduates. In almost every case, almost 50% of our graduates used transfer credits, and the average number of transfer credits used by graduates (of those who used transfer credits range from about 27 credits to 32 credits, interestingly not much variation. The average age of students using transfer credits range from 32.0 in 1988 to 34.5 in 1985 and the average number of MxCC credits used by all graduates ranges from 51.4 in 1985 to 53.0 in 1986 and '85.

TABLE VI

USE OF CREDITS BY GRADUATES

Transfer Credits

1988	N = 133 (48.9%)	Mean = 28.9	Standard Deviation = 18.0
1987	N = 116 (47.2%)	Mean = 32.1	Standard Deviation = 21.9
1986	N = 135 (51.3%)	Mean = 27.4	-----
1985	N = 127 (45.2%)	Mean = 31.0	-----

N = number of graduates who used transfer credits
Mean = average number of transfer credits used by graduates (of those who used transfer credits)

Average Age of Students Using Transfer Credits

1988	32.0	Standard Deviation = 9.4
1987	32.3	Standard Deviation =10.3
1986	32.3	-----
1985	34.5	-----

Average Number of MxCC Credits Used By All Graduates

1988	Mean = 53.0	Standard Deviation = 16.9
1987	Mean = 52.9	Standard Deviation = 19.1
1986	Mean = 53.0	-----
1985	Mean = 51.4	-----

Table VII illustrates the graduates who too remedial courses and their average ages. While the percentages of students who took these courses seems to be relatively consistent, their seems to be an upward trend in the average age of these students, as is the tendency of the average age of all of our graduates seems to be. As in the past, the same question arises as to why so few of our graduates have taken the remedial courses (especially English 98 and 99) when one of our greatest focuses at this college seems to be remediation. Do they drop out, transfer of slimply slip through the system?

TABLE VII

GRADUATES WHO TOOK REMEDIAL COURSES

			1988	1987	1986	1985
Eng 98	N = 23 (8.5%)	Average Age	24.9	25.0	23.6	22.8
Eng 99	N = 18 (6.6%)	Average Age	30.1	25.1	25.1	23.4
Math 99 (101(	N = 89 (32.7%)	Average Age	33.1	30.0	30.0	30.2
All 3	N = 5 (1.8%)	Average Age	32.0	28.0	----	----
Eng 99 & Math 99 (101)	N = 8 (2.9%)	Average Age	31.5	24.0	-----	-----

OBSERVATIONS

Most of what was done here speaks for itself. The numbers speak as facts. However, a few facts that stood out in my mind as I worked on this report are as follows: More students than ever

interrupted their education with some of them starting in the late '60's, withdrawing, and returning in the '80's. It was noticed that many of these students who dropped out during that time had low QPAs only to return in the '80s with much higher grade point averages. The trend seems to be toward part-time-only students. The average number of semesters it takes to graduate is increasing. In general, the average QPA of our graduating students remains remarkably consistent. And women in general can be counted on to have the higher QPAs and students of both sexes age 25 and older score higher QPAs.

CONCLUSION

Given any set of data, different people draw different conclusions. This data presented here seems to indicate a homogeneous group of people. Speak to almost any two of our graduates and you will see that, in reality, nothing is farther from the truth. While these graduates are drawn under a common umbrella in certain areas--those that were measured here--we also find a beautiful diversity of people, however with a common goal. And it is perhaps the focus of this goal which pulls together the commonalty that we see here. While studies such as these have their purpose, perhaps our focus should be on the differences and how we might enhance the uniqueness of our students for in truth, our graduates are, indeed, more than a product!

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